AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, the network arrangement comprising:

a first media gateway controller configured to control a first media gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol,

a second media gateway controller configured to control a second media gateway, wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol,[[and]]

a computer, and

~~comprising~~ a gateway address translator executable in the computer and incorporating proxies for said first and second media gateways respectively, wherein each of the proxies in said gateway address translator is configured to receive a control message from a respective one of said first and second media gateway controllers, and in response to the control message, forward the control message to a corresponding one of the first and second media gateways~~provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways~~, and

wherein the gateway address translator is configured to provide a virtual bearer function for messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

2. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein said gateway address translator comprises ~~gateway proxies, one for each of said first and second gateways, and~~ virtual gateways, one for each of said first and second media gateway controllers, wherein the virtual gateways are configured to provide the virtual bearer function for messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

3. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 2, wherein signaling communication between said first and second media gateway controllers is provided via a signalling network.

4. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 3, wherein said signalling network comprises a Common Channel Signaling 7 network.

5. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 2 wherein said computer comprises a non-transitory machine readable storage medium storing software of said gateway address translator ~~comprises software provided in machine readable form on a storage medium~~.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second media gateway controllers is constituted by a distributed media gateway controller pair providing separate ingress and egress functions.

8. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim [[7]]1, wherein at least one of said first and second media gateway controllers is constituted by a soft switch.

9. (Previously Presented) A system comprising:

a computer; and

a gateway address translator executable in the computer and for use in a communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services and comprising a first media gateway controller configured to control a first gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and wherein the communications network arrangement further comprises a second media gateway controller configured to control a second gateway, wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the gateway address translator executable in the computer comprising:

gateway proxies, one for each of said first and second gateways, and

virtual gateways, one for each of said first and second media gateway controllers,

wherein said gateway proxies provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways, and wherein said virtual gateways provide a virtual bearer function for messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A gateway address translator as claimed in~~The communications network arrangement of claim [[8]]1, ~~and incorporated in~~wherein one of the first and second media gateway controllers is provided as part of said computer.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services in a communications network arrangement comprising a first media gateway controller controlling a first media gateway, and a second media gateway controller controlling a second media gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the method comprising:

provisioning, by a gateway address translator executed in a computer, proxies of said first and second media gateways so as to provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second media gateways, said messaging utilizing the first protocol between the first media gateway controller and the first media gateway, and utilizing the second protocol between the second media gateway controller and the second media gateway, and

providing, by the gateway address translator executed in the computer, a virtual bearer function for enabling messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers provided with respective ones of the first and second operating protocols.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of interfacing media gateway controllers and media gateways having different operating protocols in a communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, the method comprising:

~~creating~~providing, in a computer, proxies of said media gateways; and

said proxies in the computer communicating with respective ones of said media gateway controllers utilizing respective ones of different operating protocols, wherein the media gateway controllers are provisioned with corresponding addresses of the proxies rather than corresponding addresses of said media gateways.

14. (Currently Amended) A communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, comprising:

a plurality of media gateways and a plurality of computers comprising respective media gateway controllers configured to control the corresponding media gateways, wherein said media gateway controllers employ different operating protocols, wherein plural pairs of the media gateway controllers and media gateways are provided where each of the pairs includes one corresponding media gateway controller and one corresponding media gateway, and wherein communications between said media gateway and media gateway controller in each of the pairs includes communications using a corresponding one of the different operating protocols[[, and]]; and

a gateway address translator having proxies for respective ones of the media gateways, wherein the media gateway controllers are provisioned with corresponding addresses of the proxies rather than corresponding addresses of the media gateways.

15. (Previously Presented) A non-transitory machine-readable storage medium storing software to control delivery of voice over IP or voice over ATM services in a communications network arrangement comprising a first media gateway controller controlling a first gateway, and a second media gateway controller controlling a second gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the software upon execution performing:

provisioning proxies of said first and second gateways so as to provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways utilizing the corresponding one of the first and second protocols, and

providing a virtual bearer function for enabling messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

16. (Currently Amended) The communications network arrangement ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of a first one of the proxies instead of an address of the first media gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of ~~another~~ a second one of the proxies instead of an address of the second media gateway.

17. (Currently Amended) The ~~gateway address translator as claimed in~~system of claim 9, wherein a first one of the gateway proxies is configured to communicate with the first media gateway controller using the first operating protocol, and a second one of the gateway proxies is configured to communicate with the second media gateway controller using the second operating protocol, wherein an address of the first gateway proxy rather than an address of the first gateway is provisioned at the first media gateway controller, and an address of the second gateway proxy rather than an address of the second gateway is provisioned at the second media gateway controller.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of a first one of the proxies instead of an address of the first media gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of ~~another~~a second one of the proxies instead of an address of the second media gateway.

19. (Currently Amended) The non-transitory machine-readable storage medium of claim 15, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of a first one of the proxies instead of an address of the first gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of ~~another~~a second one of the proxies instead of an address of the second gateway.

20. (New) The communications network arrangement of claim 1, wherein in response to receiving the control message from said first media gateway controller, a first of said proxies is configured to:

substitute, in the control message, an address of said first media gateway controller with an address of the first proxy, and

forward the control message containing the address of the first proxy to the first media gateway.

21. (New) The system of claim 9, wherein a first of the gateway proxies is configured to:

receive a first control message from the first media gateway controller,

substitute, in the first control message, an address of the first media gateway controller with an address of the first gateway proxy,

send the first control message containing the address of the first gateway proxy to the first gateway; and

wherein a second of the gateway proxies is configure to:

receive a second control message from the second media gateway controller,

substitute, in the second control message, an address of the second media gateway controller with an address of the second gateway proxy, and

send the second control message containing the address of the second gateway proxy to the second gateway.

22. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

receiving, by a first of the proxies, a first control message from the first media gateway controller;

the first proxy substituting, in the first control message, an address of the first media gateway controller with an address of the first proxy;

the first proxy sending the first control message containing the address of the first proxy to the first media gateway;

receiving, by a second of the proxies, a second control message from the second media gateway controller;

the second proxy substituting, in the second control message, an address of the second media gateway controller with an address of the second proxy; and

the second proxy sending the second control message containing the address of the second proxy to the second gateway.